

Mr. Speaker,

Our most important job as lawmakers is to ensure the safety of the American people.

Our local law enforcement officers serve communities across this nation as the first line of defense against crime. The number of police on our streets matters for the security of every city. We have a responsibility to ensure these officers are in place.

That is why Congress worked with President Clinton in the 1990's to create the COPS Program. Through this program more than 100,000 cops were hired, putting police in every neighborhood in our nation.

But when President Bush came to office he eliminated the COPS Program with no objections from the old Republican "rubberstamp" Congress. As a result, crime substantially increased over the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, today this Congress has an opportunity to reverse these troubling trends by passing the COPS Improvement Act. This legislation will allow local communities to hire 50,000 new police officers over the next six years so we can better protect our communities.

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